



NEWS RELEASE

State Senator Gary Nodler
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SEN. GARY NODLER CHALLENGES GOVERNOR'S CONTINUED OPERATION OF WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE DESPITE A LEGISLATIVE MANDATE TO SHUT IT DOWN

JEFFERSON CITY – In direct violation of a legislative mandate, Gov. Bob Holden has continued to operate an office in Washington, D.C. and during a Senate Appropriations Committee meeting on Wednesday, Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin, challenged Budget Director Linda Luebbering to explain the executive branch's actions.

“The governor does not have the authority, either constitutionally or statutorily, to continue to operate this office when the General Assembly specifically told him to close it,” said Nodler. “The only budget power the governor has is to withhold money. He doesn't have the authority to spend money that is not appropriated.”

During the budget process last spring, the General Assembly opted to close the state's Washington office as a cost-saving measure. The office is used largely as a lobbying tool to promote Missouri interests.

Funds normally used for the Washington, D.C. office were taken out of the Office of Administration's budget, and the Legislature made it clear to the governor that the office should be eliminated.

“We have two United States' Senators in Washington, and it is their responsibility to fight for the interests of the people of Missouri,” Nodler said. “The governor's D.C. office was redundant and unnecessary. Gov. Holden has continued to operate that office in direct violation of a legislative directive.”

In a July memo to Sen. John Russell, R-Lebanon, Senate Appropriations chairman, and Rep. Carl Bearden, R-St. Charles, House Budget chairman, Luebbering said the governor was planning to continue operation of the office by allocating “the cost ... to the state departments that most frequently use the services and information provided by the office.”

“This is truly an absurd explanation,” said Nodler. “The governor does not have the authority to ignore the wishes of the legislative branch, which has been charged with appropriating money to operate the business of the state.”

Nodler proposed that the Senate Appropriations Committee send a letter to the Missouri Attorney General requesting an investigation of the governor’s actions on this matter.

“The governor has blatantly violated the Missouri Constitution,” said Nodler. “The General Assembly and the people of Missouri cannot ignore that.”

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